

Myanmar

Depart Cairns 6th June at 6.15PM arrive Singapore 11.00PM – silk air

6 hour block Singapore transit hotel

Depart Singapore 7th June at 7.55AM arrive Yangon 9.20AM – Singapore airlines

Commence the following tour with Intrepid in Yangon on the 7th June and ending in Yangon on the 18th June

Day 1: Yangon

Min Gala Ba! Welcome to Myanmar. The former capital of Myanmar (Burma), Yangon – meaning ‘End of Strife’ – has been through tough times. Surviving protests, natural disasters and economic uncertainty, this city remains the commercial, historical and cultural heart of Myanmar.

An airport arrival transfer is included (if booked in advance) and there will be a Welcome Meeting at 6pm today. Please look for a note in the hotel lobby or ask reception where it will take place. We'll be collecting insurance details and next of kin information at this meeting, so please ensure you bring these details to provide to your leader.

Arrive at any time today, and in any free time before the meeting, get your bearings and a taste of this wonderful city. Perhaps take a walk to Sule Paya then down to the Victorian Strand Hotel to admire both the colonial architecture and the bargaining madness of Bogyoke Market. Maybe take an Urban Adventure with a local guide, such as the Let Yangon Take You For a Ride, or take the circle train through the city and suburbs and see local life in Yangon.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Optional Activities

- Yangon - Bogyoke Market (Scotts Market) - Free
- Yangon - Sule Pagoda - MMK3000
- Yangon - Let Yangon Take You For a Ride Urban Adventure - USD33

Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

Day 2: Yangon

Yangon is Myanmar's largest city and home to a wealth of ancient relics, attracting an extraordinary mix of monks, pilgrims, worshippers and tourists. Get to know this fascinating city better on a morning walking tour, including a visit to the old colonial area. In the afternoon, explore one of the great sites of Myanmar – the legendary Shwedagon Pagoda. The legendary gold-gilded pagoda is studded with diamonds and gems, and is said to contain eight hairs of the Buddha. It's a particularly impressive sight at sunset when the lights come on and the stupa shines beautifully. Spend the afternoon walking around the complex, taking in the history, spiritual significance, beauty and ambiance of this ancient site.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Yangon - Shwedagon Pagoda

- Yangon - Kandawgyi Lake
- Yangon - Walking tour

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Day 3: Mandalay

This morning head to the airport and catch a flight to Mandalay. The departure time will vary depending on flight availability. The flight takes approximately one hour, and after landing it's approximately a one-hour drive to the city and your hotel. Mandalay is Myanmar's 'Jewel City', and you'll savour the sights, sounds and flavours of this bustling metropolis on a city tour. Learn about the city's gold-leaf pounding industry and visit Mandalay Palace, Shwenandaw Monastery and Kuthodaw Paya. Head to Mandalay Hill in the evening and catch a spectacular sunset over the city. Tonight you might enjoy a walk to one of the markets, where a great time can be had enjoying the hustle and bustle or bargaining for local wares.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Mandalay - Gold Leaf Pounding Workshop
- Mandalay - Mandalay Hill
- Mandalay - Kuthodaw Paya
- Mandalay - Shwenandaw Monastery
- Mandalay - Mandalay Palace

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Day 4: Mandalay

Spend a free morning at your leisure before regrouping in the afternoon and making our way down to the city's waterfront. The lively scene offers an interesting backdrop for your boat trip upriver to Mingun. Head to the archaeological site of Mingun, the location of a number of interesting sights, including the world's largest (albeit unfinished!) pagoda – Pahtodawgyi. It's also home to the world's second largest ringable bell, the beautiful white Hsinphymae Pagoda, and temples dating back hundreds of years. The river is effectively a major trading, communication and commuting route and a wide range of different boats, barges and steamers can be viewed along the way. The journey usually takes 1 hour on the way there, and 40 minutes on the way back. Enjoy a free evening to soak up the beautiful riverside life in Mandalay.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Mandalay - Boat trip to Mingun

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Day 5: Bagan

Today, enjoy a scenic drive from Mandalay to Bagan (approximately 5 hours). On the way, stop at U Bein Bridge, the world's longest teak bridge. Arrive in Bagan, Myanmar's ancient city famous for the Bagan Archaeological Area, where more than 2,000 Buddhist monuments tower over green plains. Ready yourself to experience one of the most impressive archaeological wonders of Asia tomorrow.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Mandalay - U Bein Bridge

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Day 6: Bagan

Explore the incredible sights of Bagan today. This archaeological site is where Theravada Buddhism was introduced to the Kingdom of Bagan, and was once the site of 10,000 temples, pagodas and monasteries. Today, the ancient city still has over 4,000 brick and gilded ruins, and is a remarkable sight. Nyaung U's lively market contrasts with the eerie silence of the plains littered with temples, pagodas, stupas and ruins, including Gawdawpalin, Thatbyinnyu, Ananda and Shwezigon – all names of temples and pagodas that bear testament to a glorious past. The graceful ageing of the temples, the stucco peeled off by the dusty winds, has revealed beautifully rusty red bricks that glow golden brown in the sun. Marvel at the spire-lined skyline, the lion-guarded doors, the wood carvings inside, and the foliage-covered ruins. After visiting a local lacquerware workshop to gain insight into a craft this place is famous for, you might catch a glorious sunset from one of the ruins.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Bagan - Archaeological tour

Optional Activities

- Bagan - Horse Cart tour - MMK25000
- Bagan - Dandaree Culture Show - USD50
- Bagan - Archaeological Museum - MMK5000

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Special Information

To fully enjoy the day out, please make sure you wear comfortable clothes and adequate protection from the sun (long sleeves, sunglasses and hat).

A highlight of Bagan for many travellers is an optional sunrise hot air balloon flight over the site, possible on the mornings of Days 6 or 7 (depending on availability). Experience breath-taking views above the stupa-studded landscape, followed by a light breakfast and champagne. The experience runs for approximately 2.5 hours, with flights times an average 45 minutes (though it can range from 1

hour to 20 minutes subject to local conditions). Weather dependent, flights operate between October through to March. Advance bookings are highly recommended as places are limited. Please ask your booking agent for further details of the Premium and Classic service options.

Day 7: Bagan

Drive about 45 minutes to reach Pakkoku, about 45 minutes away. Here, we'll spend roughly an hour at the biggest thanakha market in Myanmar, as well as a local wet market. Thanakha is a cosmetic paste made from ground bark and is an ancient beauty treatment in Myanmar, said to treat wrinkles, sun damage, and acne, and even believed to help with fevers and headaches. From the markets, we'll head to a local tea shop where you can choose to try some tea and local street foods. We'll then drive another 45 minutes to reach a small village, called Kyunkalay. This is a tiny place that you won't find in any guidebooks or on Wikipedia — entirely undeveloped with no electricity, no school for the local children, and not even a monastery until 2017. The main form of transportation is by oxen cart and bicycle. We've partnered with ActionAid Myanmar, an organisation working to bring human rights and social justice to neglected communities. ActionAid doesn't believe in handouts, instead helping communities to find their own sustainable solutions. Intrepid has formed a partnership to help introduce tourism to the community of Kyunkalay in a way that is responsible, sustainable, and won't negatively impact their culture and heritage. You'll get to walk around the village and learn about important tasks locals do, such as harvesting beans and vegetables, or growing flowers. We'll then join a local family for lunch in their home, where you'll be able to learn more about what life is like in this part of Myanmar. Walk to the nearest jetty, where we'll cross the Ayeyarwady River, the largest and most important waterway in Myanmar. We'll reach Nyaung U Jetty on the other side, and from here your leader will help you to arrange for local transportation back to your hotel, or into the city to explore more on your own. In the afternoon, return to Bagan for free time and further explore this amazing city. You might hire a bicycle or even take a horse carriage and enjoy your own exploration of the seemingly endless archaeological sites. If you'd rather stay in town then there are the cafes or the nearby Nyaung U Market – one of the more interesting markets in the country.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Kyunkalay - Village visit to Action Aid community project

Meals Included

- Breakfast
- Lunch

Day 8: Inle Lake

Today drive approximately 25 minutes to the nearest airport in Nyaung U, and then hop on a plane to Heho (approximately 40 minutes), the gateway for Inle Lake. The calm waters of Inle Lake are the lifeblood for many ethnic minority communities. They live in stilt houses along the lake's shallow fringes and surrounding areas. You'll drive through picturesque countryside and rolling hills to your final destination, Nyaungshwe (approximately 45 minutes). This afternoon you might like to rent a bicycle and ride out to a local winery, where you can sample some of the local varieties and enjoy great sunset views. Otherwise, the town of Nyaungshwe is easy to walk around and explore.

Notes: You will notice that the weather is rather cooler here due to the high altitude. At certain times of year there can be lots of insects around the lake. Please read 'what to take' section for further information.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Optional Activities

- Inle Lake - Red Mountain Estate Winery Tasting - MMK3000
- Inle Lake - Bicycle hire - MMK3000

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Day 9: Inle Lake

A full day is spent on the lake seeing local life, exploring the floating gardens, and catching a glimpse of the local Intha fishermen who are famous for their unique 'leg-rowing' technique. The Intha leg-rowers navigate their long, narrow craft by standing on the stern with one leg and wrapping the other around the oar. This unique style evolved because the reeds that cover the lake and the floating plants make it difficult to see above them while sitting. The lake is also home to a wide array of bird-life including egrets, cranes, ducks, storks and various birds of prey. Visits may be made to some of the local villages, home to cottage industries such as silversmiths, weavers and cigar makers. If you're lucky, you might even see the rotating market which circles the lake every five days. Here you can buy traditional wares produced by the locals.

Stop in at one of the villages near the lake for a home cooked lunch experience and perhaps help out with some of the cooking. The surrounds will be simple, but the food delicious!

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Inle Lake - Boat sightseeing tour & local lunch

Meals Included

- Breakfast
- Lunch

Special Information

Make sure to pack some sunscreen and a hat – it gets hot on the lake with no shade.

Day 10: Inle Lake

After breakfast, take a longtail boat down a long, narrow canal to the Indein ruins complex (approximately 45 minutes). Disembark and discover a pagoda and stupas built in the 8th century. Explore the atmospheric ruins; crumbling stupas being reclaimed by greenery, and up a hill over 1000 zedi from the 17th and 18th centuries. Enjoy views across the valley and lake from the pagoda, browsing through the rows of shops along the corridor uphill, or just marvel at the surroundings. After some time exploring, start a walk towards the Yankin, Pa O and Taung Yoe villages (1.5 kilometres, approximately 45 minutes). Along the way, explore the mystery of more than 300 ancient stupas around the village and then continue 1 kilometre, approximately 30 minutes, to a Buddhist monastery. Next, head north to Naydaw (1.5 kilometres, approximately 45 minutes) to Taung Yoe ethnic tribe village through farmland and bamboo forest. From here, turn south-west (5 kilometres, approximately 3 hours) through the valley ups and downs to west Taung Mauk, Pa O village. A 20 minute walk will get you to east Taung Mauk village. Finally, turn east through valley to Indein (3 kilometres, approximately 45 minutes) where you'll meet your boat and return back to the hotel. This evening, reward all your efforts today with a traditional Shan dinner, where you'll get to sample some of the local-style culinary specialties.

Notes: The amount of walking advisable today will depend on individual and group fitness and wishes, and also the time of year. In the hotter months from March to October, reduced distances are often advisable, and arrangements can be discussed with your tour leader the day before.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Inle Lake - Indein Village temple ruins
- Inle Lake - Traditional Shan dinner

Meals Included

- Breakfast
- Dinner

Day 11: Yangon

Catch a morning flight back to Yangon (approximately 1 hour – departure time will depend on flight availability) and discover more of this beguiling city in some free time. Visit Sule Pagoda in the heart of downtown Yangon or acquire some local handicrafts at the nearby Bogyoke Market, a major bazaar known for its colonial architecture and winding cobblestone alleys, or join an urban adventure to explore Yangon's streets by night. For a leisurely change of pace, perhaps indulge in high tea at the historic colonial hotel, The Strand. Maybe relax after a day of exploring with dinner at one of the many restaurants – sit back on a balcony, watch the sun set over the glittering spires of Shwedagon Pagoda and enjoy the last night of this unforgettable Myanmar adventure.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Optional Activities

- Yangon - Yangon's Streets By Night Urban Adventure - USD40

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Day 12: Yangon

There are no activities planned for the final day and you are able to depart the accommodation at any time. As there is plenty to see and do in Yangon we recommend extending your stay a few extra days to make the most of all it has to offer. Perhaps do some of the activities suggested at the beginning of the trip, or ask your leader about our range of Urban Adventures day tours.

Optional Activities

- Yangon - Hands-on Yangon Urban Adventure - USD81

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Depart Yangon 18th June at 6.30PM arrive Singapore at 11.25PM – Singapore airlines

6 hour block Singapore transit hotel

Depart Singapore 18th June at 8.45AM arrive Cairns 5.25PM – Silk air

Cost per person \$4165.00 and includes the following:

Airfares

Airport taxes

2 X 6 hour blocks at Singapore transit hotel

12 day tour including breakfast daily, 2 lunches, 1 dinner and sightseeing as per itinerary